

FORS CLAVIGERA.

LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

LETTER THE FORTY-SIXTH.

OCTOBER 1ST, 1874.



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FORS CLAVIGERA.

LETTER XLVI.

FLORENCE, 28th August, 1874.

I INTENDED this letter to have been published on my mother's birthday, the second of next month. Fors, however, has entirely declared herself against that arrangement, having given me a most unexpected piece of work here, in drawing the Emperor, King, and Baron, who, throned by Simone Memmi beneath the Duomo of Florence, beside a Pope, Cardinal, and Bishop, represented, to the Florentine mind of the fourteenth century, the sacred powers of the State in their fixed relation to those of the Church. The Pope lifts his right hand to bless, and holds the crosier in his left; having no powers but of benediction and protection. The Emperor holds his sword upright in his right hand, and a skull in his left, having alone the power of death. Both have triple crowns; but the Emperor alone has a nimbus. The King has the diadem of fleur-de-lys, and the ball and globe; the Cardinal, a

book. The Baron has his warrior's sword ; the Bishop, a pastoral staff. And the whole scene is very beautifully expressive of what have been by learned authors supposed the Republican or Liberal opinions of Florence, in her day of pride.

The picture (fresco), in which this scene occurs, is the most complete piece of theological and political teaching given to us by the elder arts of Italy ; and this particular portion of it is of especial interest to me, not only as exponent of the truly liberal and communist principles which I am endeavouring to enforce in these letters for the future laws of the St. George's Company ; but also because my maternal grandmother was the landlady of the Old King's Head in Market Street, Croydon ; and I wish she were alive again, and I could paint her Simone Memmi's King's head, for a sign.

My maternal grandfather was, as I have said, a sailor, who used to embark, like Robinson Crusoe, at Yarmouth, and come back at rare intervals, making himself very delightful at home. I have an idea he had something to do with the herring business, but am not clear on that point ; my mother never being much communicative concerning it. He spoiled her, and her (younger) sister, with all his heart, when he was at home ; unless there appeared any tendency to equivocation, or imaginative statements, on the part of the children, which were always unforgiveable. My

mother being once perceived by him to have distinctly told him a lie, he sent the servant out forthwith to buy an entire bundle of new broom twigs to whip her with. "They did not hurt me so much as one would have done," said my mother, "but I *thought* a good deal of it."

My grandfather was killed at two-and-thirty, by trying to ride, instead of walk, into Croydon; he got his leg crushed by his horse against the wall; and died of the hurt's mortifying. My mother was then seven or eight years old, and, with her sister, was sent to quite a fashionable (for Croydon) day-school, (Mrs. Rice's), where my mother was taught evangelical principles, and became the pattern girl and best sewer in the school; and where my aunt absolutely refused evangelical principles, and became the plague and pet of it.

My mother, being a girl of great power, with not a little pride, grew more and more exemplary in her entirely conscientious career, much laughed at, though much beloved, by her sister; who had more wit, less pride, and no conscience. At last my mother, being a consummate housewife, was sent for to Scotland to take care of my paternal grandfather's house; who was gradually ruining himself; and who at last effectually ruined, and killed, himself. My father came up to London; was a clerk in a merchant's house for nine years, without a holiday; then began business on his

own account ; paid his father's debts ; and married his exemplary Croydon cousin.

Meantime my aunt had remained in Croydon, and married a baker. By the time I was four years old, and beginning to recollect things,—my father rapidly taking higher commercial position in London,—there was traceable—though to me, as a child, wholly incomprehensible—just the least possible shade of shyness on the part of Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, towards Market Street, Croydon. But whenever my father was ill,—and hard work and sorrow had already set their mark on him,—we all went down to Croydon to be petted by my homely aunt ; and walk on Duppas Hill, and on the heather of Addington.

(And now I go on with the piece of this letter written last month at Assisi.)

My aunt lived in the little house still standing—or which was so four months ago—the fashionablest in Market Street, having actually two windows over the shop, in the second story ; but I never troubled myself about that superior part of the mansion, unless my father happened to be making drawings in Indian ink, when I would sit reverently by and watch ; my chosen domains being, at all other times, the shop, the bakehouse, and the stones round the spring of crystal water at the back door (long since let down into the modern sewer) ; and my chief companion, my aunt's dog, Towzer, whom she had taken pity on when he was a snappish,

starved vagrant; and made a brave and affectionate dog of: which was the kind of thing she did for every living creature that came in her way, all her life long.

I am sitting now in the Sacristan's cell at Assisi. Its roof is supported by three massive beams,—not squared beams, but tree trunks barked, with the grand knots left in them, answering all the purpose of sculpture. The walls are of rude white plaster, though there is a Crucifixion by Giottino on the back of one, outside the door; the floor, brick; the table, olive wood; the windows two, and only about four feet by two in the opening, (but giving plenty of light in the sunny morning, aided by the white walls,) looking out on the valley of the Tescio. Under one of them, a small arched stove for cooking; in a square niche beside the other, an iron wash-hand stand,—that is to say, a tripod of good fourteenth-century work, carrying a grand brown porringer, two feet across, and half a foot deep. Between the windows is the fireplace, the wall above it rich brown with the smoke. Hung against the wall behind me are a saucepan, gridiron, and toasting-fork; and in the wall a little door, closed only by a brown canvas curtain, opening to an inner cell nearly filled by the bedstead; and at the side of the room a dresser, with cupboard below, and two wine flasks, and three pots of Raphael ware on the top of it, together with the first volume of the 'Maraviglie di Dio nell' anime del Purgatorio, del padre Carlo Gregorio Rosignoli, della Com-

pagnia de Gesu' (Roma, 1841). There is a bird singing outside ; a constant low hum of flies, making the ear sure it is summer ; a dove cooing, very low ; and absolutely nothing else to be heard, I find, after listening with great care. And I feel entirely at home, because the room—except in the one point of being extremely dirty—is just the kind of thing I used to see in my aunt's bakehouse ; and the country and the sweet valley outside still rest in peace, such as used to be on the Surrey hills in olden days.

And now I am really going to begin my steady explanation of what the St. George's Company have to do.

I. You are to do good work, whether you live or die. 'What *is* good work?' you ask. Well you may! For your wise pastors and teachers, though they have been very careful to assure you that good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, have been so certain of that fact that they never have been the least solicitous to explain to you, and still less to discover for themselves, what good works *were*; content if they perceived a general impression on the minds of their congregations that good works meant going to church and admiring the sermon on Sundays, and making as much money as possible in the rest of the week.

It is true, one used to hear almsgiving and prayer sometimes recommended by old-fashioned country

ministers. But "the poor are now to be raised without gifts," says my very hard-and-well-working friend Miss Octavia Hill; and prayer is entirely inconsistent with the laws of hydro (and other) statics, says the Duke of Argyll.

It may be so, for aught I care, just now. Largesse and supplication may or may not be still necessary in the world's economy. They are not, and never were, part of the world's work. For no man can give till he has been paid his own wages; and still less can he ask his Father for the said wages till he has done his day's duty for them.

Neither almsgiving nor praying, therefore, nor psalm-singing, nor even—as poor Livingstone thought, to his own death, and our bitter loss,—discovering the mountains of the Moon, have anything to do with "good work," or God's work. But it is not so very difficult to discover what that work is. You keep the Sabbath, in imitation of God's rest. Do, by all manner of means, if you like; and keep also the rest of the week in imitation of God's work.

It is true that, according to tradition, that work was done a long time ago, "before the chimneys in Zion were hot, and ere the present years were sought out, and or ever the inventions of them that now sin, were turned; and before they were sealed that have gathered faith for a treasure."* But the established

* 2 Esdras iv. 4.

processes of it continue, as his Grace of Argyll has argutely observed ;—and your own work will be good, if it is in harmony with them, and duly sequent of them. Nor are even the first main facts or operations by any means inimitable, on a duly subordinate scale, for if Man be made in God's image, much more is Man's work made to be the image of God's work. So therefore look to your model, very simply stated for you in the nursery tale of Genesis.

Day First.—The Making, or letting in, of Light.

Day Second.—The Discipline and Firmament of Waters.

Day Third.—The Separation of earth from water, and planting the secure earth with trees.

Day Fourth.—The Establishment of times and seasons, and of the authority of the stars.

Day Fifth.—Filling the water and air with fish and birds.

Day Sixth.—Filling the land with beasts; and putting divine life into the clay of one of these, that it may have authority over the others, and over the rest of the Creation.

Here is your nursery story,—very brief, and in some sort unsatisfactory; not altogether intelligible, (I don't know anything very good that is,) nor wholly indisputable, (I don't know anything ever spoken use-

fully on so wide a subject that is); but substantially vital and sufficient. So the good human work may properly divide itself into the same six branches; and will be a perfectly literal and practical following out of the Divine; and will have opposed to it a correspondent Diabolic force of eternally bad work—as much worse than idleness or death, as good work is better than idleness or death.

Good work, then, will be,—

A. Letting in light where there was darkness; as especially into poor rooms and back streets; and generally guiding and administering the sunshine wherever we can, by all the means in our power.

And the correspondent Diabolic work is putting a tax on windows, and blocking out the sun's light with smoke.

B. Disciplining the falling waters. In the Divine work, this is the ordinance of clouds;* in the human, it is properly putting the clouds to service; and first stopping the rain where they carry it from the sea, and then keeping it pure as it goes back to the sea again.

And the correspondent Diabolic work is the arrangement of land so as to throw all the water back to the sea as fast as we can;† and putting every sort of filth into the stream as it runs.

* See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii., “The Firmament.”

† Compare *Dante*, *Purg.*, end of Canto V.

c. The separation of earth from water, and planting it with trees. The correspondent human work is especially clearing morasses, and planting desert ground.

The Dutch, in a small way, in their own country, have done a good deal with sand and tulips; also the North Germans. But the most beautiful type of the literal ordinance of dry land in water is the State of Venice, with her sea-canals, restrained, traversed by their bridges, and especially bridges of the Rivo Alto, or High Bank, which are, or were till a few years since, symbols of the work of a true Pontifex,—the Pontine Marshes being the opposite symbol.

The correspondent Diabolic work is turning good land and water into mud; and cutting down trees that we may drive steam ploughs, etc., etc.

d. The establishment of times and seasons. The correspondent human work is a due watching of the rise and set of stars, and course of the sun; and due administration and forethought of our own annual labours, preparing for them in hope, and concluding them in joyfulness, according to the laws and gifts of Heaven. Which beautiful order is set forth in symbols on all lordly human buildings round the semicircular arches which are types of the rise and fall of days and years.

And the correspondent Diabolic work is turning night into day with candles, so that we never see the stars; and mixing the seasons up one with another,

and having early strawberries, and green pease and the like.

E. Filling the waters with fish, and air with birds. The correspondent human work is Mr. Frank Buckland's, and the like,—of which 'like' I am thankful to have been permitted to do a small piece near Croydon, in the streams to which my mother took me, when a child, to play beside. There were more than a dozen of the fattest, shiniest, spottiest, and tamest trout I ever saw in my life, in the pond at Carshalton, the last time I saw it this spring.

The correspondent Diabolic work is poisoning fish, as is done at Coniston, with copper-mining; and catching them for Ministerial and other fashionable dinners when they ought not to be caught; and treating birds—as birds are treated, Ministerially and otherwise.

F. Filling the earth with beasts, properly known and cared for by their master, Man; but chiefly, breathing into the clayey and brutal nature of Man himself, the Soul, or Love, of God.

The correspondent Diabolic work is shooting and tormenting beasts; and grinding out the soul of man from his flesh, with machine labour; and then grinding down the flesh of him, when nothing else is left, into clay, with machines for that purpose,—mitrailleuses, Woolwich infants, and the like.

These are the six main heads of God's and the Devil's work.

And as Wisdom, or Prudentia, is with God, and with His children in the doing,—“There I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight,”—so Folly, or Stultitia, saying, There is No God, is with the Devil and his children, in the *undoing*. “There she is with them as one brought up with them, and she is daily their delight.”

And so comes the great reverse of Creation, and wrath of God, accomplished on the earth by the fiends, and by men their ministers, seen by Jeremy the Prophet: “For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. [Now note the reversed creation.] I beheld the Earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void ; and the Heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.”

And so, finally, as the joy and honour of the ancient and divine Man and Woman were in their children, so the grief and dishonour of the modern and diabolic Man and Woman are in their children; and as the Rachel of Bethlehem weeps for her children, and will not be comforted, because they are not, the Rachel of

England weeps for her children, and will not be comforted—because they are.

Now, whoever you may be, and how little your power may be, and whatever sort of creature you may be,—man, woman, or child,—you can, according to what discretion of years you may have reached, do something of this Divine work, or *undo* something of this Devil's work, every day. Even if you are a slave, forced to labour at some abominable and murderous trade for bread,—as iron-forging, for instance, or gunpowder-making,—you can resolve to deliver yourself, and your children after you, from the chains of that hell, and from the dominion of its slave-masters, or to die. That is Patriotism; and true desire of Freedom, or Franchise. What Egyptian bondage, do you suppose—(painted by Mr. Poynter as if it were a thing of the past!)—was ever so cruel as a modern English iron forge, with its steam hammers? What Egyptian worship of garlic or crocodile ever so damnable as modern English worship of money? Israel—even by the fleshpots—was sorry to have to cast out her children,—would fain stealthily keep her little Moses,—if Nile were propitious; and roasted her passover anxiously. But English Mr. P., satisfied with his fleshpot, and the broth of it, will not be over-hasty about his roast. If the Angel, perchance, should *not* pass by, it would be no such matter, thinks Mr. P.

Or, again, if you are a slave to Society, and must do

what the people next door bid you,—you can resolve, with any vestige of human energy left in you, that you will indeed put a few things into God's fashion, instead of the fashion of next door. Merely fix that on your mind as a thing to be done; to have things—dress, for instance,—according to God's taste, (and I can tell you He is likely to have some, as good as any modiste you know of); or dinner, according to God's taste instead of the Russians'; or supper, or picnic, with guests of God's inviting, occasionally, mixed among the more respectable company.

By the way, I wrote a letter to one of my lady friends, who gives rather frequent dinners, the other day, which may perhaps be useful to others: it was to this effect mainly, though I add and alter a little to make it more general:—

"You probably will be having a dinner-party to-day; now, please do this, and remember I am quite serious in what I ask you. We all of us, who have any belief in Christianity at all, wish that Christ were alive now. Suppose, then, that He is. I think it very likely that if He were in London, you would be one of the people whom He would take some notice of. Now, suppose He has sent you word that He is coming to dine with you to-day; but that you are not to make any change in your guests on His account; that He wants to meet exactly the party you have; and no other. Suppose you have just received this message, and that St. John has

also left word, in passing, with the butler, that his Master will come alone; so that you won't have any trouble with the Apostles. Now, this is what I want you to do. First, determine what you will have for dinner. You are not ordered, observe, to make no changes in your bill of fare. Take a piece of paper, and absolutely *write* fresh orders to your cook,—you can't realize the thing enough without writing. That done, consider how you will arrange your guests—who is to sit next Christ on the other side—who opposite, and so on; finally, consider a little what you will talk about, supposing, which is just possible, that Christ should tell you to go on talking as if He were not there, and never to mind *Him*. You couldn't, you will tell me? Then, my dear lady, how can you in general? Don't you profess—nay, don't you much more than profess—to believe that Christ *is* always there, whether you see Him or not? Why should the seeing make such a difference?"

But you are no master nor mistress of household? You are only a boy, or a girl. What can you do?

We will take the work of the third day, for its range is at once lower and wider than that of the others: Can you do *nothing* in that kind? Is there no garden near you where you can get from some generous person leave to weed the beds, or sweep up the dead leaves? (I once allowed an eager little girl of ten years old to weed my garden; and now, though

it is long ago, she always speaks as if the favour had been done to *her*, and not to the garden and me.) Is there no dusty place that you can water?—if it be only the road before your door, the traveller will thank you. No roadside ditch that you can clean of its clogged rubbish, to let the water run clear? No scattered heap of brickbats that you can make an orderly pile of? You are ashamed? Yes; that false shame is the Devil's pet weapon. He does more work with it even than with false pride. For with false pride, he only goads evil; but with false shame, paralyzes good.

But you have no ground of your own; you are a girl, and can't work on other people's? At least you have a window of your own, or one in which you have a part interest. With very little help from the carpenter, you can arrange a safe box outside of it, that will hold earth enough to root something in. If you have any favour from Fortune at all, you can train a rose, or a honeysuckle, or a convolvulus, or a nasturtium, round your window—a quiet branch of ivy—or if for the sake of its leaves only, a tendril or two of vine. Only, be sure all your plant-pets are kept well outside of the window. Don't come to having pots in the room, unless you are sick.

I got a nice letter from a young girl, not long since, asking why I had said in my answers to former questions, that young ladies were "to have nothing to do with greenhouses, still less with hothouses." The new

inquirer has been sent me by Fors, just when it was time to explain what I meant.

First, then—The primal object of your gardening, for yourself, is to keep you at work in the open air, whenever it is possible. The greenhouse will always be a refuge to you from the wind; which, on the contrary, you ought to be able to bear; and will tempt you into clippings and pottings and pettings, and mere standing dilettantism in a damp and over-scented room, instead of true labour in fresh air.

Secondly.—It will not only itself involve unnecessary expense—(for the greenhouse is sure to turn into a hot-house in the end; and even if not, is always having its panes broken, or its blinds going wrong, or its stands getting rickety); but it will tempt you into buying nursery plants, and waste your time in anxiety about them.

Thirdly.—The use of your garden to the household ought to be mainly in the vegetables you can raise in it. And, for these, your proper observance of season, and of the authority of the stars, is a vital duty. Every climate gives its vegetable food to its living creatures at the right time; your business is to know that time, and be prepared for it, and to take the healthy luxury which nature appoints you, in the rare annual taste of the thing given in those its due days. The vile and gluttonous modern habit of forcing never allows people properly to taste anything.

Lastly, and chiefly.—Your garden is to enable you to obtain such knowledge of plants as you may best use in the country in which you live, by communicating it to others; and teaching them to take pleasure in the green herb, given for meat, and the coloured flower, given for joy. And your business is not to make the greenhouse or hothouse rejoice and blossom like the rose, but the wilderness and solitary place. And it is, therefore, (look back to Letter 26th, p. 15,) not at all of camellias and air-plants that the devil is afraid; on the contrary, the Dame aux Camellias is a very especial servant of his; and the Fly-God of Ekron himself superintends—as you may gather from Mr. Darwin's recent investigations—the birth and parentage of the orchidaceæ. But he is mortally afraid of roses and crocuses.

Of roses, that is to say, growing wild;—(what lovely hedges of them there were, in the lane leading from Dulwich College up to Windmill (or Gipsy) Hill, in my aunt's time!)—but of the massy horticultural-prize rose,—fifty pounds weight of it on a propped bush—he stands in no awe whatever; not even when they are cut afterwards and made familiar to the poor in the form of bouquets, so that poor Peggy may hawk them from street to street—and hate the smell of them, as his own imps do. For Mephistopheles knows there are poorer Margarets yet than Peggy.

Hear *this*, you fine ladies of the houses of York

and Lancaster, and you, new-gilded Miss Kilmanseggs, with your gardens of Gul,—you, also, evangelical ex-pounders of the beauty of the Rose of Sharon ;—it is a bit of a letter just come to me from a girl of good position in the manufacturing districts :—

“The other day I was coming through a nasty part of the road, carrying a big bunch of flowers, and met two dirty, ragged girls, who looked eagerly at my flowers. Then one of them said, ‘Give us a flower!’ I hesitated, for she looked and spoke rudely; but when she ran after me, I stopped; and pulled out a large rose, and asked the other girl which she would like. ‘A red one, the same as hers,’ she answered. They actually did not know its name. Poor girls! they promised to take care of them, and went away looking rather softened and pleased, I thought; but perhaps they would pull them to pieces, and laugh at the success of their boldness. At all events, they made me very sad and thoughtful for the rest of my walk.”

And, I hope, a little so, even when you got home again, young lady. Meantime, are you quite sure of your fact; and that there was no white rose in your bouquet, from which the “red one” might be distinguished, without naming? In any case, my readers have enough to think of, for this time, I believe.

NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

1. Together with the Spectator's telescopic and daring views of the Land question, given in last Fors, I may as well preserve its immediate and microscopic approval of our poor little practice upon it at Hincksey :—

"ADAM AND JEHU.—It is very vexatious, but one never gets fairly the better of Mr. Ruskin. Sometimes he lets his intellect work, and fires off pamphlet after pamphlet on political economy, each new one more ridiculous than the last, till it ceases to be possible even to read his brochures without condemning them as the utterances of a man who cannot lose a certain eloquence of expression, BUT WHO CANNOT THINK AT ALL; and then, again, he lets his genius work, and produces something which raises the admiration of the reader till every folly which preceded it is forgotten. There never was a more absurd paper published than his on the duty of the State towards unmarried couples, and never perhaps one wiser than his lecture on 'Ambition,' reviewed in our columns on the 18th of October, 1873. Just recently he has been pushing some plans for an agricultural Utopia, free of steam-engines and noises and everything modern, in which the inconsequence of his mind is as evident as its radical benevolence; and now he has, we believe, done the whole youth of Oxford a substantial service. He has turned, or rather tried to turn, the rage for athletics into a worthy channel."—*Spectator*, May 30, 1874.

The above paragraph may, I think, also be, some day, interesting as a summary of the opinions of the British press on Fors Clavigera ; and if my last month's letter should have the fortune to displease, or discomfort, any British landlord, my alarmed or offended reader may be relieved and pacified by receiving the Spectatorial warrant at once for the inconsequence of my mind, and for its radical benevolence.

II. The following paragraphs from a leading journal in our greatest commercial city, surpass, in folly and impudence, anything I have yet seen of the kind, and are well worth preserving :—

“The material prosperity of the country has, notwithstanding, increased, and the revenue returns, comparing as they do against an exceptionally high rate of production and consumption, show that we are fairly holding our own.” Production and consumption of *what*, Mr. Editor, is the question, as I have told you many a time. A high revenue, raised on the large production and consumption of weak cloth and strong liquor, does *not* show the material prosperity of the country. Suppose you were to tax the production of good pictures, good books, good houses, or honest men, where would your revenue be? “Amongst the middle classes, exceptionally large fortunes have been rapidly realized here and there, chiefly in the misty regions of ‘finance,’ [What do you mean by misty, Mr. Editor? It is a Turnerian and Titianesque quality, not in the least properly applicable to any cotton-mill business.] and instances occur from day to day of almost prodigal expenditure in objects of art [Photographs of bawds, do you mean, Mr. Editor? I know no other objects of art that are multiplying,—certainly not Titians, by your Spectator’s decision.] and luxury, the display of wealth in the metropolis being more striking year by year.

“Turning from these dazzling exhibitions, the real source of congratulation must be found in the existence of a broad and

solid foundation for our apparent prosperity ; and this, happily, is represented in the amelioration of the condition of the lower orders of society.”—Indeed !

“The adjustment of an increasing scale of wages has not been reduced to scientific principles, and has consequently been more or less arbitrary and capricious. From time to time it has interfered with the even current of affairs, and been resented as an unfair and unwarranted interception of profits in their way to the manufacturer’s pockets.

“Whilst ‘financial’ talent has reaped liberal results from its exercise, the steady productions of manufacturers have left only moderate returns to their producers, and importers of raw material have, as a rule, had a trying time. The difficulties of steamship owners have been tolerably notorious, and the enhancement of sailing vessels is an instance of the adage that ‘It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.’

“For our railways, the effects of a most critical half-year can scarcely be forecast. Increased expenses have not, it is to be feared, been met by increased rates and traffics, and the public may not have fully prepared themselves for diminished dividends. With the Erie and the Great Western of Canada undergoing the ordeal of investigation, and the Atlantic and Great Western on the verge of insolvency, it is not surprising that American and colonial railways are at the moment out of favour. If, however, they have not made satisfactory returns to their shareholders, they have been the media of great profit to operators on the stock exchanges ; and some day we shall, perhaps, learn the connection existing between the well or ill doing of a railway *per se*, and the facility for speculation in its stock.”—*Liverpool Commercial News*, of this year. I have not kept the date.

III. A young lady’s letter about flowers and books, I gratefully acknowledge, and have partly answered in the text of this *Fors* :

the rest she will find answered up and down afterwards, as I can; also a letter from a youth at New Haven in Connecticut has given me much pleasure. I am sorry not to be able to answer it more specially, but have now absolutely no time for any private correspondence, except with personal friends,—and I should like even those to show themselves friendly rather by setting themselves to understand my meaning in Fors, and by helping me in my purposes, than by merely expressing anxiety for my welfare, not satisfiable but by letters which do not promote it.

IV. Publishing the subjoined letter from Mr. Sillar, I must now wish him good success in his battle, and terminate my extracts from his letters, there being always some grave points in which I find myself at issue with him, but which I have not at present any wish farther to discuss:—

“I am right glad to see you quote in your July Fors, from the papers which the Record newspaper refused to insert, on the plea of their ‘confusing two things so essentially different as usury and interest of money.’

“I printed them, and have sold *two*,—following your advice, and not advertising them.

“You wrong me greatly in saying that I think the sin of usury means every other. What I say is that it is the only sin I know *which is never denounced from the pulpit*; and therefore *I* have to do *that part* of the parson’s work. I would much rather be following the business to which I was educated; but so long as usury is prevalent, honourable and profitable employments *in that business are impossible*. It may be conducted honourably, but at an annual loss; or it may be conducted profitably *at the expense of honour*. I can no longer afford the former, still less can I afford the latter; and as I cannot be idle, I occupy my leisure, at least part of it, in a war to the

knife with that great dragon ‘Debt.’ I war not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers of darkness in high places.”

V. To finish, here is one of the pleasantest paragraphs I ever saw in print:—

“ROPE CORDAGE.—On Saturday last a very interesting experiment was made at Kirkaldy’s Testing Works, Southwark Street, as to the relative strength of hand-spun yarn rope, machine yarn rope, and Russian yarn rope. Mr. Plimsoll, M.P., Captain Bedford Pim, M.P., and others attended the test, which lasted over three hours. There were nine pieces of rope, each 10 ft. long, being three of each of the above classes. The ultimate stress or breaking strain of the Russian rope was 11,099 lb., or 1,934 lb. strength per fathom; machine rope, 11,527 lb., or 2,155 lb. per fathom; hand-spun rope, 18,279 lb., or 3,026 lb. per fathom. The ropes were all of 5 in. circumference, and every piece broke clear of the fastenings. The prices paid per cwt. were: Russian rope, 47s.; machine yarn rope, 47s.; hand-spun yarn rope, 44s.—all described as best cordage and London manufacture. It will thus be seen that the hand-made was cheaper by 3s. per cwt., and broke at a testing strength of 7,180 lb. over Russian, and 6,752 lb. over machine-made.”—*Times*, July 20, 1874.

** FOR reasons which will be explained in the course of these Letters,
I wish to retain complete command over their mode of publication.

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